

GARDEN REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

GRAN VISTA situated in Gran Alacant (January 2020)

(translation from Spanish original).



Cistus Albidus S.L.

Medio Ambiente

medioambiente@cistus.es

647405192

1.- INTRODUCTION:

On Wednesday, October 23, 2019 I visited together with Gran Vista's President the common gardens, making a first visualization and observation of the landscape components of the gardens and made a first assessment for a possible improvement of the landscape aspects of said community.

In communities it is very common with diversity of opinions, requests for improvements or unsubstantiated and justified actions, which generate a state of continuous criticism and misunderstandings among house owners, resulting in problems of coexistence. What we intend with this report is an approach to the landscape problems present today, and we will try to provide coherent solutions, always ensuring the general interest of the community. In no case, is this report intended to criticize the work and work done by the gardening company currently maintained by the community.

If all the entities involved (house owners, Garden Committee and gardening company) work in the same direction, adopting consensual activity decisions, without a doubt, the gardens of your community will benefit as well as the coexistence between owners. There is no use in these cases for unilateral decisions that in most cases lead to errors. You live in a privileged enclave, with stunning views and only need to enjoy your environment.

2.- GOALS INTENDED TO BE ACHIEVED:

- a) Increase the visibility of the land maritime landscape
- b) Create spaces or corners that invite use, combining gardening with static elements of relaxation and rest (benches with shade trees where you can enjoy the views)
- c) Clear and trim the plant species that make hedges along internal roads
- d) Create color points with seasonal flora at strategic points of maximum use by residents and according to the time of year with chosen appropriate species.
- e) Eliminate those trees that are harming or may harm houses in the future. Trees poorly located next to houses and whose characteristics of development and growth are not adequate.
- f) Increase shaded areas in garden parts attached to swimming pools.
- g) Solve the problem of danger from fast-growing trees and branches prone to break in times of strong winds in order to avoid future accidents.
- h) Avoid along roads, lampposts and drains tree species that are causing functional problems.

- i) Prune trees that do not follow a vertical growth line due to their adaptation to the environment (rising winds) and which can cause accidents.
- j) Avoid choice of tree species that have poor aesthetic growth and generate weak and tangled branches.
- k) Have the hedges well-trimmed so that they do not impede the passage of passers-by and follow the same aesthetic throughout the urbanization.
- l) Avoid the use of oleanders (as a hedge) for their toxicity and proximity to roads with people.
- ll) Promote the use of typical species of the Mediterranean region (semi-arid southeast) such as mastic, rosemary, sage, palm hearts ... to integrate the community gardens with what was their natural environment of origin.
- m) In the future, avoid planting in palm embankments, it is simpler and less expensive with bushes and carpet plants.
- n) Have the palm trees pruned (an aesthetically isolated palm looks very good when its palm falls perpendicular to its trunk, but not so much in a set where they are planted close together).
- ñ) Delimit in some areas, lawn areas with flower beds.

3.- RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS:

3.1.- Starting with the entrance, the flowerbed (entrance box) has to be very colorful and all the elements of the garden have to be perfectly defined, all plants, palm trees and euphorbias must be cut and pruned. The entrance says a lot about the community in question, it is seen by all the owners and people who walk along the street. It is a strategic point, which has to be in optimal conditions in clipped, meaningful and colorful ways. It has the mission of being a good definition of what we want for the community. It is proposed to prune the palm trees, trim the bushes, control the growth of euphorbias and always keep a space for seasonal plants of color. For example at Christmas, and in the area reserved for temporary plants, red poinsettias typical of those dates could be planted. And in that way, for successive seasons.



3.2. There are spaces that are very well located and invite you to enjoy the landscape. However, when walking they are not as attractive as they should be. This problem is a general trend on most roads in the community. Yuccas without pruning, weeds, slightly degraded grass and fast-growing trees (eucalyptus) that make vision of the sea impossible. When it comes to improving our landscape we must study and differentiate all its elements to know how to improve them and what future actions we should take. Below we see two examples.





Imagine for a moment, the landscape that we would have if the eucalyptus were not there, the grass was in good condition, the yuccas pruned and the vegetation controlled.

3.3. The largest trees in the community are eucalyptus. Eucalyptus trees are fast-growing of Australian origin. About 30 years ago, they were planted on the coast to set dunes and consolidate soils. Its branches are soft relative to other trees which makes them very vulnerable in storms with strong winds. Its secondary branches grow in a disorderly way competing with one another for solar energy. Being fast-growing trees, their roots extract all the nutrients and water around them by drying out the soil. Any other plant has a very difficult time to grow near it, even the graminea type of grasses which suffer from lack of oxygen, nutrients and water near it. Its roots lift any pavement near it, obstruct water pipes, sewers, electrical conduits, etc. ... They are also continuously letting leaves, which makes cleaning in the area more expensive.





You can see cracks on the way, near a eucalyptus, and above a lamppost is almost covered.

With regard to the issue of eucalyptus, I would like to make clarifications in this regard so as not to lead to misinterpretations. There are several ways to deal with the subject. I am aware that cutting down a eucalyptus of this size, apparently it may seem crazy, so I propose several formulas to address the issue. From a principle point of view the problem can be analyzed by looking at favorable and unfavorable points in having eucalyptus in your community.

Favorable points:

1. They are large trees, older than 20-25 years. You have to respect them and keep them.
2. Its roots are large, fixed and consolidate the soil.
3. Depending on the observer you may like its shape.

Non-favorable points:

1. Due to their size, they impede the vision of the landscape in all their breadth.
2. They raise pavements, cracking floors. Which results in the necessity from time to time to perform work.
3. They desertify the soil beneath it and its surroundings, making it difficult for other species to develop.
4. Its branches are breakage prone, which can cause accidents.
5. Aesthetically they are not trees enriching the landscape. This point is very subjective depending on the observer.
6. They let a lot of leaves and you have to prune them every year. Maintenance work is substantial.

7. Its roots can cause damage to electrical and water pipes.

Now, taking these factors into account, we propose several options to focus on the problem so that the decisions taken are going in the right direction:

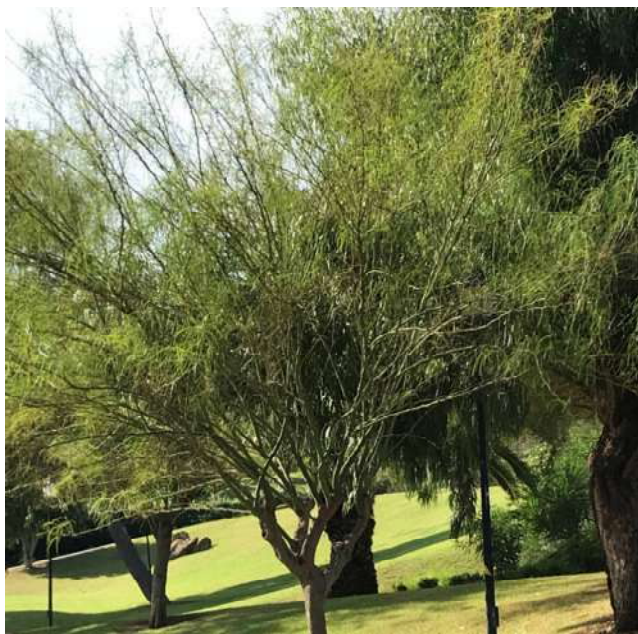
MEASURE 1: Prune eucalyptus every year, from their primary or secondary branches, and thus have their growth controlled.

MEASURE 2: Cut down a eucalyptus every year and save time and work for the gardening company. It is one tree less that they have to prune every year. So in a short period of years they would all be cut.

MEASURE 3: Make a future investment and cut them all the same year.

From experience, and when not taking measures which a priori can be radical and not easy to understand, measure 2 is the one that best suits the owners as an intermediate option. Although deep down and thinking about the future, measure 3 would be correct.

3.4. With regard to parkinsonias, there is to say that a priori it is also a fast-growing, cross-branching tree, so pruning should be aimed at guiding its secondary and tertiary branches very well to give it vertical stability and not grow bent. In some places of the community they are planted very close together, so in the future their roots and branches will compete for space. It would be appropriate to have planted one specimen per approximately 10-15 meters. It is a tree very tolerable to the climate of the area and does not need much water to survive. However, its branches are also very weak and fragile and its pruning should be aimed at thickening its diameter to gain strength and hardness. Other species could have been chosen such as carob, taray or olive. However, since they are already planted and an economic investment has been made the improvement advice regarding maintenance would be to eliminate those that are very close to each other and especially emphasize the pruning technique such as for the example shown by the photo, with very well formed crosshead increasing the thickness of its branches. Every beginning of winter cut the thin and slightly hardened branches.



3.5. As for the pines, as the gardeners who maintain the community will know, they are difficult to prune especially those that are close to the waterfront. Due to adaptation to the rising winds they tend to lean in favor of the wind, which sometimes cannot be corrected by pruning because their adaptive nature is natural. Although they are inclined they rarely tip over as they are very resistant because of their strong roots. The pines at no time harm the view of the landscape, in the lower parts they are already pruned so as not to damage the view of the coast to the residents who live in that area.



3.6. For this ficus benjamina, there are two ways to maintain it. Either with a round bushy shape, or leaving a main trunk and forming a small tree. At no time should you exceed the limits

of the road because you would need to trim it in the form of a bush due to its proximity to the



road.

3.7. The ficus that are planted near houses would have to be cut for two reasons, the first because of the damage that can be caused to the houses and the second because thinking about their long-term growth they would lack space and grow irregularly. At the same time it should be said that its roots are very superficial and that at the base of the tree the earth will harden and the grass will not spread.



3.8. Oleander hedges, the more they are trimmed with the hedge trimmer, the more they thicken until there comes a time that you just have to trim leaves not branches. From the point of view of visual aesthetics they are much nicer trimmed, providing the function of a hedge and separation of zones. In the future, in order to choose species of hedges, you could plant lentisks, crawling rosemary, myrtle, lavenders, xantholines, etc ... The toxicity of Oleander leaves is known to people. Avoid planting oleanders as much as possible as a precautionary measure. Oleanders are usually planted in areas where contact with people is not frequent or almost nil. They are typical ravine plants.



3.9. Avoid as much as possible to plant many palm trees together. They need space to grow and develop with vitality. They are large and very expensive species to plant so close together. They are also located on a slope, which will make growth more difficult. For the slopes to be decorative, the diversity of species is the best option. The roots of the palm trees are also not so strong so as to consolidate slopes. They are already planted and the investment has been made so it is not proposed to remove any. If in the future any one dies, choose other species for replacement such as palmitos (Mediterranean origin), heather, lentisks, jaras, etc ... They have spectacular appearances and simulate a palm grove very well; it is recommended to prune them a little more so as not to touch the palms and thus protect them from weevil.



3.10. Slope with good diversity of plants. Unlike the palm slope, the landscape changes completely to the better. Correct certain aspects for its improvement: Cut the big tree, prune palm trees, differentiate the line between the lawn and the slope, no shrub should exceed that limit; therefore, it is recommended to trim or if necessary eliminate the bush with the rounded shape that invades the lawn area. Plant species with different colors (gray, reddish and yellow), abundantly with green. The upper cypress hedge, trim it further, so that from above (Treffen area) you can enjoy the landscape better. Otherwise, good condition.



3.11. As we have said before, hedges must be well trimmed and must not show uncontrolled growth. The palm trees more clipped and the grass as much as possible in better condition. Arrange a difference between the cropped and the untrimmed area. With a trimmed hedge you

can see the pools very well, if it was not trimmed you would not see anything, just a screen of hedges.



3.12. You have to be careful with these plantations, before doing things you have to study the meaning it brings. An olive tree in itself, with its aged trunk is of great beauty. We cannot take the lime light by planting an oleander next to it. If you want to beautify the base of the olive tree, it is aesthetically better to form a rockery with aromatic species of low size. You have to beautify the olive tree, never harm it.



3.13. Avoid planting trees in the middle of passageways and streets. There is a mulberry tree that was planted right in the center of a street, probably because of its shadow. You have to avoid obstructing items and distractions at the center of the roads.

3.14. In the peripheral gardens, left side facing the sea, we have lawns with a lot of overgrown weeds. It would be necessary to do fumigation treatments to eliminate it so that the grass can spread without competing with this type of vegetation.



3.15. There is a cactus in the upper right peripheral part, very overgrown and very close to the cypress hedge. It does not make much sense for it to be planted in that place. It can be removed without any problem, or cutting pieces and planting them in another place, where there is rockery or similar plants.



3.16. In this area there is no automatic irrigation, gardeners have to be hooked up with mobile sprinkler hoses and move around. This results in delay in maintenance work since that time could be used for other types of more important work, thus also adding value to the work of the maintenance company. Little by little it would be necessary to install permanent and programmed sprinkler irrigation.



3.17. The cypress trees must be treated with a fungicide so that the small branches do not remain dry and avoid browning of the cypress trees. They must be treated with fosetyl aluminum or the product that gardeners use to prevent this disease. If the problem is not treated it can go further.



3.18. There are palm trees planted in places where not known why they should be there. Likewise, they have come out by natural germination but the truth is that when the one next to the sidewalk grows it will harm and the one between the oleanders should be replaced with oleanders to keep the same line of vegetation.



3.19. There are three huge palm trees in a very small parterre and very close to the houses. I am aware that they are not going to be removed now, but it is recommended that when new species are planted, the size they can reach and the meaning of their planting be taken into account.



3.20. Planting ficus near houses brings with it many problems with its roots. The one in question I recommend pruning to the maximum and leaving it in ball shape to avoid root growth. The bigger its branches, the bigger its roots.



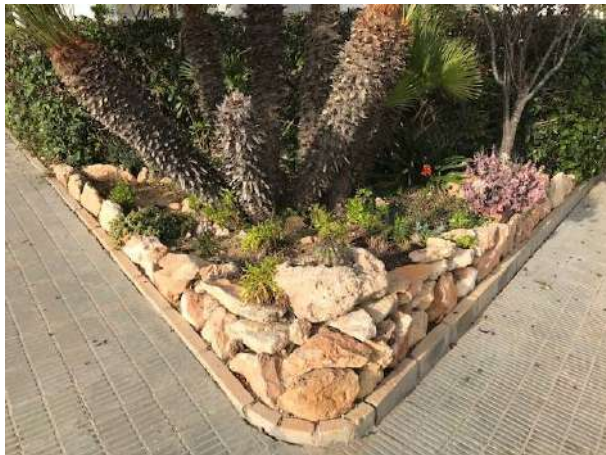
3.21. In this area, next to the wall there is a drainage problem. When it rains a lot or is watered in summer, the wall does not have a water outlet pipe so it will crack in the future as it cannot support the load. The existing vegetation would have to be unified, removing the succulent plants and loose species and plant a hedge of lentistos, myrtle, creeping rosemary, etc ...



We observe that a crack opens in the middle.



3.22. Rockery to show off plants, here mixing daisies with succulent plants. It would be necessary to establish criteria regarding the choice of plants. With aromatic species and volcanic gravel it would be very beautiful.



3.23. We find a ficus against the wall taking ground in at the center. I don't know the meaning of this plantation. They have just planted it to cover something. These plantations should be avoided as much as possible.



3.24. In this centrally delimited area without grass a bush and flowers are planted. One supposes it to be to give the area a point of color. Either the flowers are exchanged for new ones or they are removed and replanting is done with the same type of grass as in the surrounding areas. I would rather wish for the second option with reseeding around the olive tree, keeping everything uniform.



3.25. In the peripheral part closest to the sea, we find a group of euphorbias with a whitish appearance caused by their proximity to the sea. It is also a passageway between two gardens

so they will bother you in the future. Since they are not in good condition, I recommend removing them, delimiting that island well with stones and pouring yellow albero sand. Regarding the vegetation to plant, you can opt for spurge (euphorbia) that are typical trees of these areas, without disturbing the area of passage.



3.26. Near the terraces of these houses, there are two auracarias, one of them clearly belongs to the community but the other has grown right at the owner's wall. Because of the existing decoration, I think you may like it but the trunk will continue to widen, if you plan to keep it you will have to remove part of the wall for it to grow without problem.



3.27. In this parterre, we see the roots of the ficus emerging on the surface. It's their nature. There are two options, leave them because it is something very characteristic and striking, or if one does not like them, fill with topsoil and cover with natural stones or rocks from top to bottom, forming islets of different height and color playing with different types of gravel.



3.28. On the left periphery looking towards the sea next to the fence boundary the water causes erosion by surface runoff, it is good to make stone steps that hold back the water to remove speed and erosion power. The stones used for stepped terraces should be fixed with a concrete base to give consistency to the step. Between each step I would plant palm hearts that hold the ground in consolidating it.



3.29. In this area we also have problems with the roots of ficus penetrating under the houses. A problem already mentioned above and which should be eliminated to avoid house owner problems.



3.30. Lawn bed in poor condition. If the grass is not for irrigation purposes, it would be suitable to add some decorative dry element to make the area more beautiful and in addition save water.



3.31. In this garden part we have a lawn without automatic irrigation and an olive tree plantation with a false pepper between an olive tree and very close to the fence (without

trimming). It must be kept with care if it isn't to clash a lot with the rest of the trees. Don't let the top grow too high.



FINAL CONCLUSION:

The Community of House owners Gran Vista is situated in a unique enclave with great views of the sea. The unevenness allows for gardens of great importance and with priority for a high-performance landscape. The choice of plants and trees in the future is very important for a landscape design with projected improvements. Following the recommendations in this report, the landscape will improve substantially. There is no doubt that gardeners are doing a good job, but many factors that do not depend on them influence landscape and garden issues. The team of gardeners is an important factor, but the decisions of the owners even more. It requires work together and in a coordinated manner so that the final work is efficient and to the purpose.

Without any other specifics, José Ramón Bernabé, Biologist and company manager Cistus Albidus, S.L.

